



Exam number	Student D
Course Instance	March 2014
Course Name	Using Creative Methods in Research with Children and Young People CPD
Component Name	Blog 1

Please note that both the comments and the grade remain provisional until ratified by the external Exam Board in May and will be subject to change, moderation and review by our external examiners. This includes whether or not any penalties imposed are upheld.

Overview

Marking criterion	Comment	Grade A-H (if appropriate)
Critical/conceptual analysis	The blog provides a host of insightful thinking, about the uses of creative methods and how argued for. Given the discussions of the course, it could have created an even deeper discussion to debate the meanings and assumptions given to 'innovative', 'creative' methods, and power relationships thereof between children and adults.	B-C
Strength/cohesion of argument	The critiques are effectively put forward. The first paragraphs are the most tightly structured; the second set of paragraphs are less tightly organised, and have several arguments that would need to be tied in (or edited out)	B-C
Use of sources/evidence	Very good use is made of further sources	A
Structure & organisation	The blog was clearly organised. See above re argument	B
Breadth and relevance of reading	The blog could only have been improved by further use of sources (but was not required by the assessment).	A
Clarity of expression, presentation and referencing	The blog was very lucidly written and well-referenced.	A
Suggestions for future work	The blog was a very good contribution, in ably meeting the task set, in developing a number of critical considerations and making good use of other resources. For development, even more use of resources and further critique would have developed and deepened the critical consideration.	

Susan Elsley and Kay Tisdall, as course convenors, maintain a file of anonymised assessments with feedbacks for further students to consult. If you would prefer to have your assignment not included within this file, please inform Kay Tisdall k.tisdall@ed.ac.uk.

Name: Student D

Title of Paper: Online Contribution – Citizen Me!

Word Count: 520

Resource Title:

Citizen Me! Engaging children and young people in your organisation (Section 3) Practical information for participation

Resource Location:

<http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/Publications---resources/Participation-resources/Citizen-me-/Citizen-me->

Critical Comment¹:

The *Citizen Me!* online resource has been developed by the *NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)* to assist organisations to meaningfully and effectively involve children and young people in their decision making. Section 3 focusses on the methods by which children and young people can participate in consultation or research activities. I have made two observations about the information in this [section](#).

The purpose of innovative techniques

The CCYP does not explain the purpose of using innovative techniques in this [toolkit](#). It would be important for anyone referring to the toolkit to understand the many reasons creative methods of engagement (as opposed to more traditional approaches) are useful in engaging with children. Children are often seen as incompetent as a result of their age. However, Melton et al (2014) highlight that "...'incompetence' is sometimes a methodological artefact..." (p8). Thereby, our focus on providing ways of communication that tap into children's natural creativity widens the potential for their genuine contribution. They are [innovative](#) because they do not rely as heavily on written or verbal communication methods, which children may still be developing. The task-based activities can enable children to feel more comfortable with adult researchers. The creative task can change the power inequalities between child and adult because both are seen as active partners in the research (Christensen and James [2000](#)).

Furthermore, the toolkit does not take into account the widely accepted practice of using task-based methods *with* traditional research methods. Punch (2002) recommends this combination to ensure we treat children the same as adults; avoid children being patronized; and that they have a range of opportunities to display their competencies.

Creative engagement with different ages

The second concern is that the toolkit suggests creative methods for children in the different stages of development. We cannot know what methods are suitable for each child based on their age. It does rightly state that "it is very difficult to attach specific methodologies to fixed ages... Cognitive capacities and maturity levels will differ within each age group." (p36). This is not only the case for children of different ages, but also children's contexts, such as those living in disadvantaged communities or with comparatively fewer opportunities for formal education. Children are a heterogeneous group. However, the suggested methods provided, (undoubtedly based solely on age), become less arts-based or creative as age increases. This assumes that older children will not

¹ Postgraduate Development Course: Using Creative Methods in Research with Children and Young People Assessment for 2014

Kay 25/9/14 15:02

Comment [1]: A solid descriptive introduction. The reader will thus know what the resource is about.

Kay 25/9/14 15:02

Comment [2]: Good starting statement – I am clear what your argument is going to be about.

Kay 25/9/14 15:01

Comment [3]: Are such methods so innovative now, as many people within childhood studies research use?

Kay 25/9/14 15:03

Comment [4]: From the discussions of this course, would there be any queries to discuss – e.g. what is 'creative', what is children's 'natural creativity', will such methods always address power inequalities?

be interested in particular examples of creativity and provides an inaccurate frame for the use of creative methods.

All creative engagement approaches can be appropriate at any age/stage of cognitive development, with children, adolescents and adults. They can provide an alternative medium for expression, (especially on sensitive issues), be a diversionary but legitimate activity, and offer a sense of fun and enjoyment which is appealing to the participant thereby encouraging engagement and a lasting impact. The suitability of a particular method is based on how well it will meet the aim of the research or consultative project and the practicalities of using the approach with a specific group of participants. We can also consider the need to ask children and young people about what they think of methods (Hill: 2006) and/or enabling children to develop the research tools themselves (Coad et al: 2009). Child-Led research is a case in point where children and young people have the opportunity to design their own research methods when seeking other children's perspectives.

Overall, it is essential to take a 'reflexive and critical approach' (Punch 2002, p330) when using innovative techniques to consider the benefits and drawbacks of each technique. We should keep in mind that, "As with other vulnerable groups, researchers need to be open and resourceful, to ensure that participation translates into a positive experience for the children..." (Melton et al 2014, p22).

References

Christensen, P. and James, A. (eds) (2000) *Research with Children: Perspectives and practices*. London: Falmer Press.

Coad et al (2009)

Hill, M. (2006) 'Children's voices on ways of having a voice. Children's and young people's perspectives on methods used in research and consultation', in *Childhood*, 13, 1, 69-89.

Melton, Gross-manos, D. Ben-Arieh, A. and Yazykova, E. (2014) 'The Nature and Scope of Child Research: Learning about children's lives' in Melton, G et al (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Child Research*. London: Sage.

Punch, S. (2002) 'Research with Children: The same or Different from Research with Adults?', in *Childhood*, 9, 321-341.

Kay 25/9/14 15:03

Comment [5]: An insightful comment, that is argued through.

Kay 25/9/14 15:04

Comment [6]: This is an apt comment, which is a core message of the course.

Kay 25/9/14 15:04

Comment [7]: This sentence is provocative. Is it perhaps introducing a further issues, that you would need more space to explore?